

**TESTIMONY OF
THE UNITED ILLUMINATING COMPANY
Before the Energy and Technology Committee**

Re:

**HOUSE BILL 6631 – An Act Concerning Electric Utilities and Utility Service
Termination**

Legislative Office Building

March 10, 2009.

In multiple family dwellings access by utilities has become more difficult; partly due to the availability of inhabitants and partly due to apathy.

Owners of these dwellings have historically assisted utilities in this access issue yet it is alarming to see an increasing number of owners reluctant to assist. This reluctance creates additional costs caused by the utility's inability to address revenue loss issues because it cannot access its equipment. These costs are invariably passed on to the rate payer.

The bill seeks to assign the ongoing costs of not providing access to our facilities with the entities that have effective access control to our facilities - owners, agents, lessors or managers of multiunit buildings.

For these reasons, the United Illuminating Company strongly supports **House Bill 6631 – An Act Concerning Electric Utilities and Utility Service Termination** and urges The Energy and Technology Committee to give it a Joint Favorable Report.

We have also attached written testimony in support of another issue that has been before this committee since 2006. Section 4 of the bill seeks to reinstate a statute that was inadvertently repealed in 2005 as being obsolete when in reality it wasn't. While I'm not well versed on this issue, our Director of Government Relations may answer questions on the issue if needed. The committee has also acted on the issues therein in various occasions since its repeal and we urge a favorable report on this section as well.

This statute confirms the authority of electric utilities to take actions outside of their service areas (such as purchasing power in the regional market, owning transmission and other facilities as currently authorized by law.) that are necessary for the utilities to meet their public service obligations within their service areas. The language in Section 4 was discussed and agreed to with representatives of NRG in 2008. Other generators did not offer comments on the language.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will try to answer any questions you may have.

Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello, and members of the Energy and Technology Committee: My name is George Balsamo and I am the Meter Security Manager for the United Illuminating Company. I am here today to express UI's strong support of raised **House Bill 6631 – An Act Concerning Electric Utilities and Utility Service Termination.**

The content of Sections 2 and 3 of this bill have been before the Committee several times; most recently in Committee Bill 5694. We have offered testimony in strong support of the concept in prior occasions. The Committee has also acted favorably on it in prior sessions and we urge you to do so again in 2009. The House of Representatives has adopted the bill by overwhelming votes in every occasion. The United Illuminating Company and a representative of a statewide property owners organization agreed on the concept and language of the proposal in prior sessions and do so again in 2009. This language also includes the language suggestions by Mr. Marshall Collins in testimony regarding HB 5694 several weeks ago.

The importance of utilities to access their equipment for purposes of inspection, testing, removal, exchange and the like has been recognized since metering was first developed. Utilities in the northeast have a significant portion of their revenue metering located indoors. It has become increasingly difficult for utilities to access their metering despite many attempts to notify inhabitants and owners of this need.

It is well known that the cost of energy has increased significantly and ratepayers have been dramatically affected as a result of these costs. Utilities are obligated to keep these increases at a minimum.

The examination, testing and associated meter work is more important than ever to assure both our customers and the Company the equipment is working properly and the need for utilities to access their equipment to perform these tasks has become equally important. The advent of automatic metering allows utilities to measure energy more reliably than ever before. It is important to the ratepayer that this reliability be maintained.